(b) and (c) Improvement, expansion and ensuring quality service in Speed Post is a continuous process. A separate Business Development Directorate within the Department has been set up to manage Speed Post on business lines.

[English]

Survey for New Rail Line between Dhulia and Indore

3638. DR. SAHEBRAO SUKRAM BAGUL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted recently for new rail line between Dhulia and Indore via Narona and Shirpur in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) A survey for new BG line from Dhule to Nardana and its extension upto Shirpur, is currently in progress. There is no proposal for taking up a survey for a new line from Shirpur to Indore at present.

[Translation]

Gauge Conversion between Ranchi and Lohardaga

3639. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the provisions for gauge conversion between Ranchi and Lohardaga and to extend it upto Tori have been made in the supplementary Demands for 1996-97;

(b) if so, the details of the works undertaken in this direction upto July, 1997; and

(c) the time by which the above work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs clearance has been obtained and preliminary arrangements are being made for taking up the work. Rs. 10 crores has been provided in the budget 1997-98 for this work.

(c) The work is expected to be completed in about 10 years time subject to availability of resources.

[English]

Funding of Technology for Paper Industry

3640. SHRI SURESH PRABHU : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Technology Development Board (TDB) has approved a proposal to fund the Commercialisation of an Eco-friendly pulping technology for the paper industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of other ancillary industry likely to be helped therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) The Technology Development Board has received a proposal to fund the commercialisation of eco-friendly pulping technology for the paper industry from a Pune based private sector company. The proposal has gone through various stages of evaluation and the final decision is dependent upon the response of the applicant to the specific queries made by the Board.

(c) The proposal envisages recovery of by-products-lignin and hemicellulose, besides pith from effluent generated by the plant. There is, therefore, a possibility of growth of ancillaries based on lignin as raw material.

[Translation]

Construction of Broad Gauge Line from Ajmer to Ahmedabad

3641. SHRI TARACHAND BHAGORA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether laying of broad gauge line from Ajmer to Ahmedabad via Chittorgarh-Udaipur (Rajasthan) has been taken up; and

(b) if so, the time by when the construction work of this line has been started?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Work has been taken up for Gauge conversion of Ajmer-Chittaurgarh-Udaipur at a cost of Rs. 262 crs.-Udaipur-Ahmedabad Gauge Conversion is not yet sanctioned. Tenders have been invited and actual work is expected to start by Oct.'97.

[English]

Promotion of Senior Technicians

3642. SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA :
SHRI PARASRAM MEGHWAL :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether posts were reduced in the cadre of Sr. Engineering Assistant and Engineering Assistant which diminished the promotion chance of Senior Technicians;

(b) whether besides the above cut, people are still working and drawing salary in major stations like DDK Delhi etc.; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not promoting to Senior Technicians?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) As part of the general policy guidelines of the Government, 10% of posts in the Ministry and each of the attached and sub-ordinate offices etc., including those of Senior Engineering Assistants and Engineering Assistants, were abolished.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Promotions of Senior Technicians have not been effected due to non-availability of vacancies in the grade of Engineering Assistants, etc.

[Translation]

Telephone Demand in Gujarat

3643. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VERMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are demands for telephone connections in each district of Ahmedabad, Bhavanagar, Dholaka and Dhanduka of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the telephone connections sanctioned and installed in each of the above districts during 1994 till date;

(d) the time by which the remaining telephone connections are likely to be provided; and

(e) the target set for providing telephone connections in the above districts during August 1, 1997 to December 31, 1998?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Sir, the details of demands for telephone connections as on 31.7.97 in Ahmedabad Telecom District (including Dholaka and Dhandhuka Talukas) and Bhavanagar Telecom District are given in Statement-I.

(c) The information is given in Statement-II.

(d) The remaining waiting list as on 31.7.97 is likely to be cleared by and of March 1999 progressively subject to timely availability of materials and repurchase.

(e) The target set for providing telephone connection during 1.8.97 to 31.3.98 are as under :—

Ahmedabad Telecom Distt. : 46575 (including Dholaka & Dhandhuka Talukas

Bhavanagar Telecom Distt. : 15110.

Plan for 1998-99 has not yet been finalised. However the balance waiting list as on 31.7. 97 in both districts is likely to be cleared by March 1999.

Statement-I

	Name of Distt.	Working connections as on 31.7.97 (a)	Waiting List as on 31.7.97 (b)	Demand as on 31.7.97 (a+b)
1.	Ahmedabad Telecom Distt (including Dholaka & Dhandhuka Talukas)	303186	54522	357708
2.	Bhavanagar Telecom Distt.	34229	22044	56273

Statement-II

	Name of Distt.	Telephone connections sanctioned & installed during				Waiting list as on 31.7.97.
		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1.4.97 to 31.7.97	
1.	Ahmedabad Telecom Distt. (including Dholaka & Dhandhuka Talukas)	23660	36170	32216	3425	54522
2.	Bhavanagar Telecom Distt.	4615	3549	3674	890	22044

[English]

Telephone Exchanges in Nalanda

3644. SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the capacity of telephone exchange at Nalanda is very limited and does not provide its subscribers with dynamic lock facility;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to expand its capacity;

(c) If so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which expansion work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. At present C-DOT 128P exchange is working at Nalanda. In such small size exchanges, the dynamic lock facility is not available due to technical reason.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. There is a plan to expand existing exchange at Nalanda to 256P by March 1998. This exchange will have the facility of dynamic lock.